

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KIGALI 1541

FI CHANNEL

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OGEN, PDEV, RW
SUBJECT: POST MEMORANDUM: RWANDA

I. STATE OF US-RWANDAN RELATIONS

PRIMARY US INTERESTS IN RWANDA RELATE TO ITS
POVERTY, OVER-POPULATION, AND ETHNIC TENSIONS. AS
ONE OF THE WORLD'S POOREST AND MOST REMOTE COUNTRIES,
RWANDA HAS THE DESIRE BUT NOT THE MEANS TO ACHIEVE
MUCH PROGRESS IN THESE AREAS WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP.
IF PRESENT TRENDS TOWARD DIMINISHED PRODUCTIVITY
OF FARMLAND AND RAPIDLY GROWING POPULATION ARE NOT
ARRESTED SOON, IT IS ONLY A QUESTION OF TIME BEFORE
FAMINE OR OTHER HUMAN DISASTER STRIKES, WITH LIKELY
FURTHER NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION
AND ON REGIONAL STABILITY.

IN RECOGNITION OF THESE FACTORS, THE USG HAS ADOPTED GOALS
AND OBJECTIVES FOCUSED ON THE NEED FOR MORE FOOD, AN
EFFECTIVE POLICY TO SLOW DOWN POPULATION GROWTH, AND
FURTHER PROGRESS IN ETHNIC RECONCILIATION. (THESE OBJECTIVES
FIT EASILY WITH PRIORITIES ESTABLISHED BY RWANDA'S
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POLICYMAKERS.) SECONDARILY, WE ALSO SEEK TO ENCOURAGE
CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN RWANDAN AND ITS NEIGHBORS AND
RWANDAN UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR US POSITIONS
ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES.

A. FOOD: WE HAVE HELPED FOCUS DONOR ATTENTION ON
RWANDA'S NEED FOR MORE HELP IN THIS SECTOR, WHILE MAIN-

TAINING OUR TITLE II PROGRAM, ENGLARGING OUR FOOD STORAGE PROJECT, AND PLANNING EXPANSION INTO RELATED FIELDS (COMMUNAL SILOS, STRATEGIC STOCKS, COOPERATIVES). WE HAVE DISCUSSED WITH THE GOR AND ARE EXAMINING PROJECT POSSIBILITIES IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, FISH CULTURE, AND INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT. BUT PROGRESS HAS BEEN SLOW AND OUR CREDITIBILITY HAS SLIPPED IN RECENT MONTHS.

B. POPULATION: DISCREETLY BUT PERSISTENTLY, WE HAVE PUSHED GOR ALONG FROM BLUNT OPPOSITION TO ACTIVE CONSIDERATION OF DEMOGRAPHIC POLICY OPTIONS, PARTLY WITH SPA FUNDS AND JAWBONING, PARTLY INDIRECTLY THROUGH PATHFINDER FUND. PROGRESS HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING, AS GOR FINALLY BEGINS TO CONSIDER SERIOUS MEASURES. IMPORTANT US TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE CALLED FOR TO PROVIDE AND MAINTAIN MOMENTUM.

C. HUMAN RIGHTS: GOR DEMONSTRATED ITS SERIOUS CONCERN BY CO-HOSTING AN AFRICAN COLLOQUIUM ON HR, WHICH WE LARGELY FUNDED, AND BY BEEFING UP ITS ROLE ON UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION. GOR IS NOW PLANNING CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM AND ELECTIONS TO RESTORE CIVIL LEGITIMACY; IT CONTINUES TO PURSUE ETHNIC RECONCILIATION POLICY BASED ON PROPORTIONAL QUOTAS AND -- EXTERNALLY -- AN IMPROVED COOPERATION WITH BURUNDI; AND OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH GOR ON "POLITICAL PRISONER" CONFIDENTIAL

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ISSUE HAVE HELPED SENSITIZE THEM TO INTERNATIONAL HR IMAGE.

NOTWITHSTANDING GAINS CITED RE A, B AND C ABOVE, THE USG HAS MOBILIZED FEWER RESOURCES THAN JUSTIFIED IN SUPPORT OF ITS OBJECTIVES. MANY FACTORS ACCOUNT FOR THE DIFFICULTIES IN ACCELERATING US DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (SEE SECTION II BELOW), BUT THE RESULT HAS BEEN THAT A HONEYMOON PERIOD BEGUN ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO HAS GRADUALLY WANED, AND A SENSE OF FRUSTRATION INFORMS A GROWING PART OF THE MISSION'S CONTACT WITH GOR POLICY MAKERS. THIS FRUSTRATION HAS NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECTED OUR ACCESS TO GOR OFFICIALS-- THE RWANDANS SEE ADVANTAGES IN CULTIVATING FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH US, AS WELL AS WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS AND WITH OTHER ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL AID DONORS BUT THERE ARE SIGNS THEY ARE BECOMING LESS RESPONSIVE TO USG INITIATIVES AND REQUESTS ON REGIONAL AND GLOBAL POLICY ISSUES -- INDEED, MORE STUBBORN IN TAKING ISSUE WITH OUR OWN AID PROPOSALS--AND THEY ARE MORE SUBJECT TO THE INFLUENCE OF CHINA, NORTH KOREA, AND LIBYA.

D. REGIONAL RELATIONS. RWANDA SEEKS GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL NEIGHBORS -- DEPENDS ON THEM, IN FACT, TO OVERCOME LIMITATIONS OF ITS LANDLOCKED, REMOTE CONDITION. WE HAVE ENCOURAGED PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS A SOURCE OF HOPE FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS. ONE PROMISING POSSIBILITY IS THE INITIATIVE BY RWANDA, BURUNDI AND ZAIRE TO MAKE THEIR ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF GREAT LAKES STATES (CEPGL) AN EFFECTIVE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOL. ANOTHER IS THE GROWING NETWORK OF COOPERATION WITH TANZANIA, ESPECIALLY ON TRANSPORTATION MATTERS. THE USG IS EXAMINING POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROJECTS IN BOTH OF THESE CONTEXTS.

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E. GLOBAL ISSUES. DISAPPOINTMENT WITH US ASSISTANCE LEVELS REINFORCES, WE THINK, RWANDAN VISCERAL DISTRUST OF A TOO-CLOSE

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ASSOCIATION WITH GREAT POWERS (USSR EVEN MORE THAN US). THE CONSERVATION, MOUNTAINEER MENTALITY OF A PEOPLE WITH LITTLE EXPERIENCE IN WORLD AFFAIRS PRE- DISPOSES THEM TO AVOID TAKING POSITIONS ON CONTRO- VERSIAL ISSUES OF LITTLE DIRECT CONCERN TO THEM, ALTHOUGH THE HABYARIMANA GOVERNMENT TAKES A MORE ACTI- VIST APPROACH THAN ITS PREDECESSOR AND LISTENS CLOSELY TO OUR DEMARCHES. THEIR CHARACTERISTIC STYLE IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

IS TO STAY IN THE BACKGROUND, FOLLOW THE CONSENSUS OF THE AFRICAN GROUP (OR G-77), AND OCCASIONALLY SEEK TO PLAY A HELPFUL ROLE IN WORKING OUT ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISES AMONG OTHERS. THAT APPROACH, ASSUMING IT CONTINUES, WILL ASSURE A CONTINUED HEARING FOR US VIEWS, BUT WE CAN EXPECT LITTLE LEVERAGE UNTIL WE SUCCEED IN MOVING ENOUGH RESOURCES TO RWANDA TO PUT US AT LEAST INTO THE MIDDLE RANK OF DONORS--WITH FRANCE, FRG, AND PRC, FOR EXAMPLE.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES AND PROBLEMS.

A. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BILATERAL POLICY ISSUES ARE THE FOLLOWING.

1. QUANTITY OF US DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. RWANDA MEETS ALMOST ALL CRITERIA FOR RECEIVING INCREASE US AID: IT IS AMONG THE VERY POOREST COUNTRIES; IT
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IS COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE LOT OF THE POOR RURAL MAJORITY; ITS DEVELOPMENT GOALS DOVETAIL NEATLY WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL MANDATE; AND IT HAS A GOOD HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. IN LATE 1976 AN AID OFFICE WAS RE-OPENED IN KIGALI, SIGNALING USG WILLINGNESS TO MOUNT MORE PROJECT ASSISTANCE, BUT INTENTIONS HAVE BEEN SLOW TO MATERIALIZE (PARTICULARLY TO RWANDAN EYES). ALTHOUGH MAJOR PROJECT POSSIBILITIES ARE AT VARIOUS STAGES OF STUDY AND NEGOTIATION. GOR HAS GROWN SKEPTICAL ABOUT OUR FUNDING PROJECTIONS, IMPATIENT AT OUR PHASED APPROACH, AND FRUSTRATED AT OUR UNWILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE THE "IMPACT" CAPITAL PROJECTS THEY HAVE PROPOSED, ESPECIALLY WHEN THESE APPEAR TO FALL WITHIN "BASIC HUMAN NEEDS" CATEGORIES (E.G., INTENSIVE FOOD GROWING, RURAL HOSPITALS, RURAL ROADS). AND IT BALKS WHEN WE REDESIGN GOR PROJECT PROPOSALS TO FIT OUR OWN STANDARDS AND MOLDS. (NOTE: AID AFFAIRS OFFICER TAKES EXCEPTION TO THIS LATTER POINT.)

IF BOTTLENECKS IN PROJECT DESIGN AND NEGOTIATION PROCESS CAN BE OVERCOME, WASHINGTON OFFERS HOPE THAT USAID PROJECT ASSISTANCE CAN GROW RAPIDLY OVER 2 OR 3 YEAR PERIOD FROM PRESENT \$1-2 MILLION LEVEL TO 8-10 MILLION, OR EVEN MORE. UNTIL A BREAKTHROUGH OCCURS, HOWEVER, BILATERAL FRUSTRATION IS LIKELY TO GROW.

2. FORM OF US DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. "RWANDA NEEDS DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL AND EXPERTISE, NOT SOCIAL WORKERS," SAYS PRES HABYARIMANA; AND TH FOREIGN MINISTER ECHOES "RWANDA IS AN UNDER-EQUIPPED COUNTRY" (AS OPPOSED TO UNDER-DEVELOPED). NO WONDER, THEN,

IN MOVING TOWARD BASIC HUMAN NEEDS PROJECTS,
WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED SHARP CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES
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WITH THE GOR. A PROPOSED FISH CULTURE PROJECT
DESIGNED FOR IMPLEMENTATION CHIEFLY BY PEACE
CORPS MET OPPOSITION FROM RWANDAN POLICYMAKERS, WHO
ARGUE THAT PCV PRESENCE AS A KIND OF EXTENSION WORKER
IS UNDESIRABLE--THAT HIGHLY QUALIFIED FOREIGN
EXPERTS ARE NEEDED IN MINISTRIES, BUT FIELD IMPLEMENTATION
OF PROJECTS SHOULD BE THE WORK OF RWANDANS THEM-
SELVES. WE THINK THEY UNDERESTIMATE THE POTENTIAL
VALUE OF PCV'S IN EXTENSION WORK AND SIMILAR AREAS,
WHILE OVEREMPHASIZING CAPITAL INPUTS AND "CURE-ALLS,"
BUT WE WILL NOT GAIN ANYTHING BY TWISTING THEIR ARMS
BEFORE THEY ARE READY TO CONSIDER THE ISSUE FROM
ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE. FOR NOW, THEREFORE, THE
FUTURE OF A PEACE CORPS PROGRAM IN RWANDA IS IN DOUBT.

3. MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP. IN MID-1977 THE
GOR REQUESTED A LONG LIST OF NON-LETHAL MILITARY
EQUIPMENT FROM THE US. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REQUEST
RESTED NOT ON SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS BUT ON THE
GOR DESIRE TO PUT ITS MILITARY TO WORK IN "NATION-
BUILDING" ACTIVITIES. THE RWANDAN REQUEST STIMULATED
LIVELY DEBATE WITHIN THE USG, BUT AFTER SEVERAL
MONTHS A NEGATIVE ANSWER WAS RETURNED, MAINLY DUE
TO THE ADMINISTRATOR'S DESIRE TO AVOID NEW SUPPLY
COMMITMENTS, BUT ALSO REFLECTING CONCERN THAT DEVELOPMENT
OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS MIGHT BE INHIBITED BY
ASSISTANCE TO THE MILITARY, EVEN FOR CONSTRUCTIVE
PURPOSES. THE RWANDANS HAVE CHOSEN TO TREAT THE
USG ANSWER AS AN INTERIM RESPONSE. THEY HOPE THAT
EVOLUTION OF US POLICY, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF
SHABA II, WILL LEAD US TO RECONSIDER DESIRABILITY
OF ESTABLISHING CLOSER TIES TO RWANDAN ARMY AS AN
AGENCY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

4. GROWING INFLUENCE OF RADICAL STATES. WHOLLY
DEPENDENT ON EXTERNAL AID FOR DEVELOPMENT, THE GOR
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ORIENTS ITS FOREIGN POLICY IN LARGE PART TOWARD
AID POSSIBILITIES. IN RECENT YEARS PRC AID HAS
BECOME IMPORTANT, AND THE GOR HAS MOVED CLOSER
TO CHINA ON GLOBAL ISSUES, MOREOVER HOLDING THAT

CHINESE AID STYLE IS A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OTHER DONORS
TO FOLLOW AND ITS "WORK ETHIC" A HEALTHY EXAMPLE
FOR RWANDANS. THE NORTH KOREAN PRESENCE HAS ALSO

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BECOME IMPORTANT (DESPITE ONLY MINOR AID INPUTS);
AND THE INFLUENCE OF LIBYA HAS GROWN, ALBEIT ENGENDERING
INTERNAL GOR CONTROVERSY. RWANDANS SEE THESE
THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES IN PART AS ALTERNATIVES TO
CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH GREAT POWERS, AND WHILE GOR
DOES NOT ADOPT SHRILL TONE OF RADICALS, IT OCCASIONALLY
GOES ALONG WITH RADICAL POSITIONS ON ISSUES OF
LITTLE DIRECT CONCERN (WHILE ON ZAIRE, SOUTHERN
AFRICA, AND UGANDA, ALL OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO RWANDA,
THE GOR IS DECIDELY MODERATE). WE HAVE NOT REALLY
COME TO TERMS THUS FAR WITH MEDIUM-AND LONG-TERM
IMPLICATIONS FOR A COUNTRY LIKE RWANDA TO DEEPENED
RELATIONS WITH COMMUNISTS AND RADICALS AS AN IMPLIED
ALTERNATIVE TO WESTERN INFLUENCE.

B. IMPORTANT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS FOR POST MANAGEMENT
ARE THE FOLLOWING.

1. INCREASING ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT
A GROWING PROGRAM. AS DESCRIBED IN THE EMBASSY'S
GORM SUBMISSION (KIGALI 282) AND RELATED DOCUMENTS,
ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES, ADEQUATE FOR THE MORE
LIMITED ACTIVITIES OF TWO YEARS AGO, ARE STRETCHED
DANGEROUSLY THIN FOR OUR PRESENT SIZE -- AND PROJECTED
FUTURE GROWTH WILL IMPOSE STILL GREATER STRAIN ON
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ADMIN. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT RESOURCES ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED FROM DEPARTMENT AND OTHER AGENCIES WITH PROGRAMS IN RWANDA -- AID ABOVE ALL, AND ICA AND PC. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AT POST HAS YIELDED PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A JAO AND KIGALI A-30 SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIES WHAT RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED TO MAKE JAO FUNCTION; MATCHING EFFORT IS NEEDED FROM WASHINGTON TO PROVIDE THESE RESOURCES.

2. FUTURE NEEDS FOR CHANCERY AND OTHER SPACE. ENLARGED USG PROGRAMS HAVE NECESSITATED ACQUISITION OF ADDITIONAL SPACE; DURING FY-78 BOTH AID AND PC OPENED OFFICES AWAY FROM CRAMPED CHANCERY COMPOUND. DECISIONS MUST BE MADE IN COMING MONTHS CONCERNING FUTURE CHANCERY SPACE ITSELF. WE EXPECT TO LEASE ADJOINING BUILDINGS OF BELGIAN AID MISSION BEFORE THE END OF 1978, WHICH WILL EASE PRESENT CROWDED CONDITIONS. LANDLORD OF PRESENT CHANCERY WANTS TO SEEL PROPERTY, WHICH HAS EXCELLENT LOCATION. IF USG DOESN'T BUY IT, ANOTHER PURCHASER IS LIKELY EITHER TO USE THE PROPERTY HIMSELF WHEN OUR LEASE EXPIRES IN JUNE, 1980, OR MAY OTHERWISE MAKE CONDITIONS UNFAVORABLE FOR OUR REMAINING. AN ADDITIONAL POSSIBILITY IS CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BUILDING IN AN UNDERVELOPED SUBURBAN AREA SET ASIDE BY THE GOR AS THE FUTURE DIPLOMATIC QUARTER AND GOVERNMENT OFFICE CENTER. THE EMBASSY HAS PROVIDED FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE WITHOUT FORECLOSING ANY OF THESE OPTIONS FOR THE LONGER TERM, BUT IT WILL SOON BE NECESSARY TO ARRIVE AT MORE DEFINITIVE PLANS AND BEGIN TO CARRY THEM OUT.

3. UPGRADING OF POST SECURITY. THE EMBASSY HAS LONG BEEN AWARE THAT PHYSICAL SECURITY STANDARDS ARE BELOW

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THOSE NORMALLY ESTABLISHED. IN CONSULTATION WITH RSO NAIROBI AND OTHER SECURITY SPECIALISTS WHO HAVE VISITED KIGALI, MINOR IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE, BUT MAJOR RENOVATIONS NEEDED FOR FULLY ADEQUATE SECURITY HAVE NEVER BEEN UNDERTAKEN BECAUSE OF HIGH COST, LOW LEVEL OF PERCEIVED THREAT, AND UNCERTAINTY OVER CHANCERY LOCATION. AS OUR PRESENCE BECOMES MORE IMPORTANT, AND AS KIGALI'S ISOLATION SLOWLY DIMINISHES, PRUDENCE REQUIRES A FRESH LOOK AT THE SECURITY NEEDS OF THE ENTIRE MISSION. IN COORDINATION WITH RSO NAIROBI, WE ARE PLANNING SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

IN FY-1979.

4. COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES. ONE LONG-STANDING PROBLEM IS APPROACHING A HAPPY SOLUTION. MAJOR BUILDING MODIFICATIONS ARE UNDERWAY, TO BE FOLLOWED BY INSTALLATION OF AFRECON RADIO EQUIPMENT THAT WILL GIVE EMBASSY KIGALI RELIABLE, INDEPENDENT MEANS FOR SENDING AND RECEIVING OFFICIAL TELEGRAPHIC TRAFFIC FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE NEW SYSTEM IS SCHEDULED TO BE OPERATING BEFORE THE END OF 1978.
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